

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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ACDA-07 NRC-05 OES-07 ERDA-05 AID-05 COME-00

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3254

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMCONGEN HONG KONG

AMCONGEN BOMBAY

AMCONGEN CALCUTTA

AMCONGEN MADRAS

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

CINCPAC HAWAII

USUN NEW YORK

CONFIDENTIAL NEW DELHI 6597

E.O. 11652: XGDS 1

TAGS: PFOR,IN,UR

SUBJECT: THE GROMYKO VISIT - CONTINUITY WITHOUT HYPERBOLE

REFS: 76 NEW DELHI 8731, NEW DELHI 5828, NEW DELHI 5901, NEW

DELHI 6035, NEW DELHI 6104 NOTAL

1. AS WE LOOK AT THE VISIT OF SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER GROMYKO IN RETROSPECT WE ARE STRUCK BY THE EMPHASIS BOTH INDIA AND THE SOVIET UNION PLACED ON THE CONTINUITY OF THEIR RELATIONSHIP. THIS IS CONFIDENTIAL

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OBVIOUSLY IMPORTANT TO EACH PARTY, AND PERHAPS BEST UNDERSCORED ON THE INDIAN SIDE BY DEFENSE MINISTER JUGJIVAN RAM'S OBSERVATION TO VISITING FRG MINISTER GENSCHER THAT INDIA HAS NO OTHER DEPENDABLE SOURCE OF ARMS SUPPLIES THAN THE SOVIET UNION. IT IS ALSO REFLECTED IN THE COMMENTS OF KNOWLEDGEABLE INDIANS WHO RECOGNIZE THE PROBLEMS AND INCONGRUITIES IN THE RELATIONSHIP, BUT WHEN PRESSED OFTEN ASSERT THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAS NEVER LET

INDIA DOWN. THE TRADE ASPECTS ARE NOT UNIMPORTANT, BUT IT IS THE POLITICAL PERCEPTIONS AND MILITARY TIES WHICH BIND THE TWO COUNTRIES.

2. BOTH THE SOVIET AND THE NEW JANATA PARTY GOVERNMENTS APPARENTLY SAW FIT TO IGNORE THE MUTUAL RECRIMINATIONS THAT MARKED THEIR PAST ATTITUDES TOWARD EACH OTHER. MEA JOINT SECRETARY PURUSHOTTAM AND SOVIET ACTING DCM FIALKOVSKY TOOK PAINS IN THEIR PRIVATE SEPARATE CONVERSATIONS WITH THE EMBASSY'S ACTING POLITICAL COUNSELOR TO STRESS THAT GROMYKO AND VAJPAYEE IGNORED THE PAST IN THE INTEREST OF CONTINUING CLOSE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. THE MEA OFFICER AND THE SOVIET DIPLOMAT ALSO CONTENDED THAT THE TWO MINISTERS ESTABLISHED A HIGH DEGREE OF RESPECT FOR ONE ANOTHER. FIALKOVSKY SAID OF PRIME MINISTER DESAI AND FORMIN VAJPAYEE, "THESE ARE MATURE EXPERIENCED MEN...," ADDING THAT THE SOVIET UNION DOES NOT FIND IT DIFFICULT TO DO BUSINESS WITH THEM. WE SUSPECT, HOWEVER, THAT THE SOVIETS FOUND SOME WAY, DIRECT OR INDIRECT TO CONVEY AN APOLOGY FOR THEIR ELECTION-TIME CRITICISM OF THE JANATA PARTY. VAJPAYEE TOLD GENSCHER IT WAS NECESSARY, AND WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE NATIONAL DEFENSE COLLEGE STAFF TOLD STUDENTS AN APOLOGY WAS RECEIVED.

3. THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE IS REMARKABLE FOR THE DIMINUTION OF HYPERBOLE AND MARXIST JARGON WHICH CHARACTERIZED THE DECLARATION FOLLOWING INDIRA GANDHI'S JUNE 1976 MOSCOW VISIT. THE COMMUNIQUE ABSTAINS FROM EXPRESSIONS SUCH AS "DEEP SATISFACTION.. STRESSED SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE...EVER INCREASING POSITIVE INFLUENCE ON EXPANDING COOPERATION." THE ELEMENTS IN THE COMMUNIQUE-HALF AS LONG AS THE DECLARATION - HOWEVER, ARE LARGELY THE SAME.
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FIALKOVSKY TOLD US THE INDIANS REJECTED THE ORIGINAL LONGER SOVIET DRAFT, AND PURUSHOTTAM OBSERVED THE SOVIETS WERE MORE FLEXIBLE IN COMMUNIQUE NEGOTIATIONS.

4. THE INDIANS CONTEND THE GOI HAS EDGED AWAY FROM THE SOVIET POSITION ON ASIAN SECURITY. FIALKOVSKY ASSERTED THERE WAS NO CHANGE. ON BASIS OF COMPARING THE TWO DOCUMENTS WE THINK THE INDIANS ARE CORRECT, BUT THAT THE MOVEMENT IS NOT VERY SIGNIFICANT. FIALKOVSKY ASSERTED THE POSITION OF BOTH COUNTRIES ON THE INDIAN OCEAN REMAINS THE SAME. THIS APPEARS TO BE VALID. AS THEY DID IN JUNE 1976, THE SOVIETS INSISTED ON A REFERENCE TO THE "RECOGNIZED RULES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW" IN THE INDIAN OCEAN PARAGRAPH

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A FORMULATION THAT UNDERSCORES THE SOVIET INTENT TO PROTECT UNLIMITED RIGHT OF PASSAGE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. THE DISARMAMENT LANGUAGE INCLUDES REFERENCES TO THE SSOD NOT CONTAINED IN THE JUNE DECLARATION, BUT THE POSITION OF INDIA DOES NOT VARY FROM EARLIER AND PUBLIC PRONOUNCEMENTS. ALTHOUGH THE COMMUNIQUE MENTIONS THAT "POSITIONS...ON MANY IMPORTANT QUESTIONS ARE IDENTICAL OR CLOSE...," WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO PINPOINT AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT,

EXCEPT FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA CONCERNING WHICH THE COMMUNIQUE STATES THE TWO SIDES "EXCHANGED VIEWS" ON THE NEED FOR A TREATY. (IN FACT THE MEA TELLS US THERE WERE NO DISCUSSIONS ON THIS SUBJECT.) FAILKOVSKY WAS NOTABLY RELUCTANT TO RECOUNT DISCUSSION ON CHINA, AND PURUSHOTTAM WAS NOT MUCH MORE HELPFUL.

POSITIONS ON OTHER TOPICAL INTERNATIONAL QUESTIONS -- THE MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTH AFRICA SEEM TO BE MUCH THE SAME. REFERENCES TO KOREA AND CYPRUS WERE OMITTED.

5. WE HAVE LITTLE TO ADD TO THE INTERPRETATION OF THE TRADE AND AID AGREEMENTS WHICH WERE COVERED IN NEW DELHI 6115. THE LANGUAGE OF THE COMMUNIQUE ON TRADE EXPANSION IS LARGEMLY HORTATORY, BUT DOES STRESS "EQUALITY, RECIPROCITY AND MUTUAL BENEFIT." WE SUSPECT THE INDIANS ATTEMPTED TO ESTABLISH THE RHETORICAL BASIS FOR FURTHER ECONOMIC TALKS.

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6. FIALKOVSKY SAID THE SOVIETS WANTED TO DISCUSS THE NPT, BUT THE INDIANS REFUSED. THE COMMUNIQUE LANGUAGE ON CONSULTATIONS IS NOTABLY SHORTER - CONSULTATIONS AND EXCHANGES ARE DESCRIBED AS VALUABLE RATHER THAN OF "GREAT IMPORTANCE." IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO OBSERVE HOW SOON THE NEXT EXCHANGES TAKE PLACE IN VIEW OF THE OFFICIAL LEVEL GOI DISSATISFACTION WITH THE LAST ROUND OF OFFICIAL LEVEL TALKS. FIALKOVSKY TOLD US THE INDIANS DID NOT WISH TO INCLUDE THE REFERENCE TO "OTHER STATES OF THIS REGION" IN THE FORMULATION PERTAINING TO THE USSR'S ENDORSEMENT OF INDIAN EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH GOOD NEIGHBORLY RELATIONS IN SOUTH ASIA.

7. THE TALKS STRESS ONCE AGAIN THE CONTINUITY IN THE JANATA GOVERNMENT'S FOREIGN POLICY. IF SENSITIVE ISSUES - RUPEES/RUBLE EXCHANGE RATES, ARMS PURCHASES, HEAVY WATER SAFEGUARDS, OR CRUDE OIL SUPPLIES - WERE DISCUSSED, THEY WERE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL. THE INDIANS HAVE NOW UNDERSCORED THE IMPORTANCE THEY ATTACH TO THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOVIET UNION, BUT IN SO DOING THE GOI HAS MARGINALLY ALTERED ITS STANCE AS INDICATED BY THE COMMUNIQUE, HAS PRESERVED FLEXIBILITY AND HAS MAINTAINED THE OPTION OF MOVING TOWARD A MORE EVEN HANDED RELATIONSHIP WITH THE OTHER GREAT POWERS.

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